

“On Memorial Day, we take time to recognize the sacrifice of those men and women who gave their lives under the United States flag. In just and unjust wars alike, nothing can besmirch the bravery and loyalty of our nation’s soldiers who paid the most terrible price in the course of their service.

“But, as we grieve for the dead, we remember our duty to the living. The families of fallen soldiers have often lost not only a mother, father, or best friend, but also a breadwinner who was the bedrock of their financial security. I consider it my duty, as a member of Congress, to ensure that these families, and the millions of struggling families like them, never fall through the cracks in our support system and do not suffer disproportionately because of cuts to vital assistance programs. I do not accept that expenditures on the machinery of war ought to take precedence over the needs of the hungry and downtrodden.

“We must also remember our duty to the wounded soldiers who face a long journey to recovery. Their injuries can often be hidden from the naked eye. Almost one in five soldiers in the previous decade suffered a traumatic brain injury, and fifteen percent of veterans are diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. These harms may not be as visible as a missing limb, but can be even more damaging to a veteran’s future and relationships.

“We have had successes in bringing greater awareness to this issue through the Congressional Neuroscience Caucus, including hosting Colonel Dallas Hack, M.D., director of the US Army Combat Casualty Care Research Program at a recent briefing. It is far past time that we fully committed the necessary resources to the treatment and diagnoses of these injuries, which is why I am offering an amendment to this week’s military construction legislation to do just that.

“We will never forget the sacrifice that our soldiers have made, and we will rededicate and recommit ourselves to the twin ideals of creating a safe and secure home for them to return to, and working for a future where they don’t have to shed their blood in our name.”